

Encourage USDA to modify the *Smart Snacks in School* rule to allow all menu items that are permitted to be served as part of a reimbursable meal to be sold at any time a la carte.

SNA supports ensuring “competitive foods,” sold a la carte and in vending machines, meet school nutrition standards, so *all* foods sold in school are healthy choices. However, the *Smart Snacks in School* rule forced schools to take many healthy school meal options off of their a la carte menus and created inconsistent rules that unnecessarily limit student choice and reduce revenue for school meal programs.

School meal standards set limits on unhealthy, saturated fat, but *Smart Snacks* inexplicably limits *total* fat to 35% of calories or less, pushing heart-healthy foods rich in unsaturated fats off a la carte menus. Veggies brushed with olive oil don’t make the cut. Guacamole and hummus, promoted under meal standards as a healthy way to introduce students to legumes, are prohibited in the a la carte line because they are too high in the kind of healthy fats that help keep cholesterol in check. School nutrition professionals struggle to make sense of two sets of complicated, sometimes conflicting, standards for the same foods.

School meal standards are gradually phasing in sodium reductions, but the *Smart Snacks* rule did not, forcing competitive foods to meet excessively low sodium limits. For instance, a 2-ounce equivalent of USDA’s low-fat deli-style turkey breast – without bread, cheese or condiments – surpasses the sodium limit for entrees (≤ 480 mg). Salads, or vegetables paired with dip, have also taken a hit as the sodium in low fat dressing often exceeds limits.

Indeed, none of the popular Panera Bread salads, sandwiches or soups meets *Smart Snacks* entrée standards, and health conscious fans of Sweetgreen will not find one of the chain’s “simple, seasonal, healthy salads and grain bowls made in-house from scratch” that even comes close to meeting *Smart Snacks* mandates.

Allowing foods that meet nutrition standards for school meals to be sold as daily a la carte choices ensures students can choose from a variety of healthy options in the cafeteria. This change will also relieve unnecessary administrative burdens for school nutrition professionals and help preserve the financial sustainability of school meal programs.